

Overview of the Revised Structure and Cycle of the Accreditation System

In the proposed revised accreditation system, accreditation should be viewed as an ongoing process rather than a point in time evaluation that is good until the next site visit. Instead, activities take place at the institution throughout a seven year cycle and build one upon another. In the current accreditation system, the site visit is designed to review all individual programs, program documentation, supporting evidence and the institution that recommends for credentials as a whole at the one visit. In the proposed revised system, the review of the information would be distributed over time and additional information would be included. The revised accreditation system asks each program to submit data/information that shows how candidate competence is assessed in the program and how the candidates perform on the assessments. The proposed revised accreditation system, although recognizing the importance of meeting all standards and maintaining a review of the institution as a whole, focuses particular attention on candidate competence/performance standards and evaluation/assessment standards.

Data Gathering and Analysis (Annually): Each program collects standards related data (contextual, demographic, and candidate competence data). The program aggregates and analyzes the data, utilizes data driven decision making and then makes appropriate adjustments internally. The institution keeps the data gathered and submits a report every two years.

Report to the Commission/COA (Years 2, 4, and 6): The institution reports the data for each program for the current and prior year to the Committee on Accreditation. In addition to the data, each report includes a brief statement of analysis and an action plan based on the analysis. Each institution or program sponsor also submits an institutional summary identifying trends across the programs or critical issues. The Committee on Accreditation and CTC staff reviews the biennial reports. If the report is not submitted, is incomplete or is inadequate, CTC staff will contact the institution/program. If the report has been submitted but the data do not demonstrate measures of candidate competence or have deficiencies, Committee on Accreditation and CTC staff will request additional information from the institution/program.

Upon review of the response from an institution where deficiencies are identified, the Committee on Accreditation may request additional information or even schedule a program review or a site visit prior to the scheduled time period.

Program Review (Year 4 and 5): Each program that is offered by an institution/program sponsor must submit an updated version of its approved program document including up to date syllabi. The update will detail all modifications in the program since its approval. In addition, the candidate assessments, rubrics, and scoring procedures that generated the data gathered over the current year and previous three years must be submitted. Program reviewers (trained members of the BIR) review each program through a review of updates to approved program documents, data reports, and the Reports to the Commission/Committee on Accreditation . The program review team may raise questions or request additional information. The program will submit additional information and evidence to address the questions that the reviewers have raised. Reasonable time limits need to be observed by both the program and the reviewers so that the preliminary findings are submitted to the Committee on Accreditation at least one year prior to the scheduled site visit. The program review team considers all information and comes to “preliminary findings” for all program standards. The program review team submits any additional questions or areas of concern to the Committee on Accreditation and makes a recommendation to Committee on Accreditation whether the issue needs to be further reviewed at the site visit. The Committee on Accreditation will consider the recommendation and in so doing, will determine the nature of the program review including size and composition of the team, that will take place during the site visit.

Site Visit (Year 6): An accreditation team will visit each institution or program sponsor in its sixth year of the accreditation cycle. Prior to the visit, the institution will submit a self-study that responds to the Common Standards. The institution will prepare for a site visit that focuses mainly on the Common Standards, but includes students, graduates, and faculty as well as other stakeholders from all programs that are sponsored by the institution. The site review team is composed of 3 to 6 members that will focus on the Common Standards plus any program areas directed to be reviewed by Committee on Accreditation as a result of the program review.

Within the site visit, each program in operation will participate fully in the interview schedule. The Committee on Accreditation may add additional members to the team with expertise in the program area(s) to be reviewed at the site visit. The site review team will submit a report with program findings and an accreditation recommendation to the Committee on Accreditation. It is possible that the site visit team may uncover a program concern or issue not previously identified by the program reviewers. If this occurs, the team may recommend a follow up focused program review to examine the concerns or issues that have arisen. In this event, there would be no accreditation recommendation until after the focused review has been completed. The Committee on Accreditation will review the team report prior to making an accreditation decision. When follow-up is required, the COA will indicate what follow-up is required and when.

Follow-up to site visit: (Year 7) The institution and all its programs will begin to respond to any follow-up required by the Committee on Accreditation. Committee on Accreditation will determine the timeline for response from the institution. The timeline for the Committee on Accreditation follow up may extend beyond the one year.